

But one of the most interesting theories is one you may not have heard: the story of Harry Hoosier.

Harry Hoosier, sometimes spelled Harry Hosier, was described by Booker T. Washington as “the first Black American Methodist preacher in the United States.” Born enslaved around 1750, Harry Hoosier was sold to a plantation near Baltimore, where he became a talented religious orator who traveled throughout the Appalachian frontier, according to Fisk University Professor William D. Piersen.

Harry Hoosier’s story is one of resilience and success. Despite being illiterate, Mr. Hoosier’s message was heard far and wide, and he became one of the best-known and greatest preachers of his time. According to a recent bill in the Indiana Statehouse, “many of Harry Hoosier’s followers brought their Methodist beliefs and Hoosier nickname to Indiana in the decades before and after Indiana was granted statehood in 1816.”

With his great influence, it is believed that Mr. Hoosier’s followers became known as Hoosiers, followers who were also part of a growing number of Methodists beginning to question the practice of slavery. With a Black leader as an example, these 18th Century “Hoosiers” may have honed the principles we understand as “Hoosier Hospitality” today—the belief in kindness, equality, and respect.

Until recently, I had never heard the story of Harry Hoosier, despite attending school in Indiana and surrounded by strong, Black leaders and family members throughout my lifetime. But Harry Hoosier confirms what we already knew: Black history has always been American history, and Black history has always been Hoosier history. From oral traditions passed down from generation to generation, to the legacy of legends like Madam C.J. Walker, Mari Evans, Major Taylor, Wes Montgomery, the Jackson 5 and Babyface, Black Hoosiers have always been part of our state’s story.

Bringing this story into the light gives us a better understanding of the vast, diverse history of our great state. And during Black History Month, there is no better time to learn our history and to celebrate it.

While there are many partisan arguments surrounding education—including recent political stunts falsely claiming that Black studies has no educational value—Harry Hoosier’s story is slowly making its way into our modern consciousness in a bipartisan way. In 2016, the Indiana Bicentennial Commission endorsed the “Harry Hoosier Project,” an effort to share the story of the man who lives on in our conversations every day. This year, Indiana State Representative J.D. Prescott, a Republican, introduced House Bill 1143 recognizing Harry Hoosier as our state’s namesake. Unfortunately, this bill did not make it to the floor for a vote—but I hope Harry Hoosier’s story inspires others to begin to unwrap more forgotten or neglected stories.

History—the way we tell it, the way we analyze it, and the ways we pass it on to future generations—is always evolving. Our stories have always existed. But these stories need to be shared with everyone, and they need to be recognized as a vital part of American history too.

Harry Hoosier lived centuries ago. We can’t speak to him or even know as many details about his life as we may want to. But his existence, the stories we have of him, are what define our past and shape our future.

Black history is about joy. It’s about survival, resilience, and it’s about success. Above all, it needs to be shared.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BOB VOSE

HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Robert “Bob” W. Vose, of Springfield, Illinois, who passed away on Monday, January 20, 2023. He was 94 years old.

The son of John and Hedwig Vose, Bob was born on January 29, 1929. He was raised in Springfield alongside his five brothers and six sisters, where he attended Sacred Heart Grade School and Lanphier High School until he chose to serve our country in the United States Army.

Bob was a proud and active citizen, humbly serving his country and community. Bob would marry Virginia in 1953 and raise his six children in the city he loved. He would work for the Illinois Ice Company before becoming a City Water Light and Power meter reader and, eventually, a stationary engineer for the State of Illinois. He was a proud member of IBEW union, organizing with Local 193 for 65 years.

Bob would become the first city alderman elected to represent Ward 5 and continued to be an advocate for his ward and its residents long after his term of service expired. He was a very generous man, donating his time and talents to a great many local causes throughout his entire life. He loved playing the role of Santa Claus at the city recreation department and was a referee and umpire of high school sports for several years. He sponsored the annual Goodwill client Halloween and Christmas parties for 34 years. He was a member of the Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation and was very active in fundraising for the cemetery and responsible for Monument Avenue Beautification improvements.

Bob’s statewide claim to fame were his corn dogs. Based on his grandmother’s recipe that he safeguarded, “The Korndog King” would start selling his famous Vose Corn Dogs at the Illinois State Fair in 1967 with his brothers. Eventually, Bob and Virginia would continue Vose Fine Food on the fairgrounds for 50 years and become a fourth-generation family business. The Vose Family Corn Dog stand is a staple of the fair and continues to be an annual tradition.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents; wife Virginia; four brothers; and six sisters. He is survived by his 6 children, Robert Vose, Jr., Virginia (Mike) Geiger, Ronald (Marybeth) Vose, Kenneth (Roxann) Vose, Debra Vose and Sandra (Robert) Orr; 14 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; last brother, Harold (Jean) Vose; and several nieces and nephews.

Robert was an icon of Springfield; one not built from a desire for fame, but one established from his years of service and dedication to the betterment of his community. His absence will leave a large hole within Springfield, and he will be missed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote on February 27, 2023 for Roll Call Vote 120 and Roll Call Vote 121. Had I been present, my vote would have been the following: Yea on Roll Call Vote 120, and Yea on Roll Call Vote 121.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF PAUL WOODS

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible life and service of Paul Woods as he celebrated his 100th birthday on February 20, 2023. Along with defying the average lifespan and despite segregation, Paul Woods fought for our democracy in the Pacific Theater of World War II. As we celebrate Black History Month, I think there’s no better example of American courage than Buffalo’s own Paul Woods.

Paul Woods was born in Alabama on February 20, 1923 in an era of racial oppression and segregation. When his father died, he and siblings were split at the gravesite among relatives. Paul Woods promised that he would raise his brother Sherman, and for the rest of his life “Daddy” has been taking care of people.

Paul Woods joined the segregated U.S. Army in 1941 when he was just 17 years old. He often says that “A bullet knows no race, rank, or status. We were all brothers on the battlefield.” The bravery of Black units overseas belied their second-class status at home and helped lead to the abolition of racial segregation in the military in 1948 as well as the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 2012, Paul and 30 other World War II vets were flown to the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. Five years later, Wish of a Lifetime sponsored a trip to Australia where he visited the exact location of his service during World War II and was thanked by the U.S. Consul General. Today he is the World War II Coordinator for the Jesse Clipper American Legion Post 430.

After helping to protect the Philippines, Paul Woods moved to the Buffalo region where he worked 16-hour days at Bethlehem Steel to feed his growing family. From Alabama to Australia, teenage recruit to war hero, and segregated soldier to seeing the first Black president, Paul Woods’ life has spanned continents, a world war, and the fight for racial equality. The father of 15 will turn 100 on February 20, 2023, having seen multiple children and grandchildren serve in the same military his bravery helped to desegregate.

Mr. Speaker, I’m thankful for the chance to honor Paul Woods, a longtime Western New York resident who helped free the Philippines despite enduring injustice at home. A proud member of Prince of Peace Church of God in Christ in Buffalo and husband to the late Mary